

# Building Bridges Between Cultures

(prepared by Michael Andregg for Pusan National University, Republic of Korea, 3-18-02)  
Dr. Andregg can be reached at the University of St. Thomas, 2115 Summit Ave. MCG,  
St. Paul Minnesota 55116, USA, + 651-962-5300 or [mmandregg@stthomas.edu](mailto:mmandregg@stthomas.edu).

## 1. Why?

Building bridges between cultures can involve many challenges, so the first subject I will address is: Why do this work? Answers important to me include: human survival, achieving prosperity through trade, compassion (especially for those who suffer, like refugees of war and relatives separated by politics) and achieving “the good life” spiritually as well as materially. All of these objectives benefit from a principle of living systems called “hybrid vigor.” These concepts will be illustrated by a few examples.

Human civilization is facing a terrible crisis. It is a crisis of population growth combined with excessive consumption by the rich, which results in serious environmental problems and severe competition for the means of survival. Combined with other strains of politics, both normal differences of opinion about how to organize social life and more serious issues of corruption of governance and tyranny, this results in many wars (about 25 – 30 each year during the 23 years I have studied that subject). On the average half a million people die each year directly from these wars. Suffering from dispersed effects like refugee migrations and malnutrition related to the economic costs of these conflicts affects hundreds of millions every year. Human civilization is groaning in pain, but powerful psychological and social defenses exist that keep most people from hearing that pain clearly.

It is the business of biologists to attend the living system. I testify before you that the living system itself is in danger because of these problems. If you need convincing I will gladly spend another hour or a day on that alone, because in my country at least, there are always excuses for taking just a little bit more from the living system despite its obvious distress. But our business today is building bridges between cultures, so I will return to that now with the simple observation that if the living system of earth is in trouble, human beings are in trouble. Human survival may even be at risk. So one reason to build bridges between cultures is to restrain people from blowing up the world with nuclear weapons, or despoiling it with endless conventional wars and the new, exotic biological and chemical weapons.

Long ago I was a medical geneticist at a major University hospital. One reason I switched to why wars begin was what I knew about biological weapons 25 years ago. We have come a long way since then, and it is not a pretty picture. But even without such exotic weapons, the annual death rate from ordinary bombs and bullets should be plenty to inspire us to build some bridges to a better future for us all.

A positive reason for building bridges is the prospect of increasing prosperity through trade. Now, I will venture a small observation on Korean politics. I apologize if I offend anyone. It is very sad to read about starvation in the North at the same time we read about fear created by Taepo-Dong II missiles, and a million-man army. Therefore, it was a happy day when we read about a new “sunshine policy,” and I was pleased when your President Kim Dae Jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his lifelong work for a better future.

I also recall a picture of a very successful South Korean businessman, taking some cows and bulls to the North as a gesture of reconciliation and support. I know an agronomist from my own University who has arranged for 1000 tons of seed barley to be delivered to the North as a gift. And I know that in the long run, productive trade is dramatically better for both sides of a political divide, no matter how deep, than expensive and dangerous military confrontation. The case of East and West Germany comes quickly to mind. They are both far better off today than 29 years ago when I looked over the wall that divided Berlin at a moonscape of barbed wire, tank traps, mines and machine guns.

So building prosperity through productive trade is a good reason to build some bridges between cultures that trade could travel on.

Compassion is a reason for me to build some bridges. There is much pain on this earth, much suffering, and compassionate people feel that pain more deeply than some others. Compassion is a great resource, as the Buddhists have shown us in particular. But certainly Jesus also lived a life of compassion, and urged this as one of the most important virtues to those he taught. Strong words of support for compassion can be found in every scripture on the earth that I have seen.

Reflecting again on the Korean peninsula for a moment, I recall the large numbers of people with relatives in both North and South. And I recall that just a moment ago as civilizations and geneticists measure time, North and South were one civilization with 5,000 years history. So my heart is sad as I imagine the pain of relatives separated. And my head hurts when I hear friends from the military tell me how every child was taught for an hour in school, each day, about how evil their neighbors were, their cousins were. It makes me very sad to hear these things, so I think that compassion is a good reason to build some positive bridges. Not for invasions, rather for relief of the pains of political separation.

Northern Ireland provides another example. Ireland has different religious, political and historical roots, but as in Korea and the Germanys, ordinary people have suffered much pain paying a big price for political egos. Time is short, so I'll move on now except to note that their long conflict may finally be ending too. What they can do, you can do in due time.

I mentioned the good life earlier; what does that entail? To me it includes the three items above, plus one other. To be specific, the good life requires no serious threats to human survival, some minimum prosperity such that basic needs are met, prospects for solving the problems of acute suffering that trouble compassionate people so much, and one other item – the opportunity for spiritual development. My reading of religious literature on the earth, and my experience watching fundamentalists make war on each other, very strongly suggests that the wisest religion requires taking some looks at all the religions.

Each seems to have parts of a larger whole, and all reproduce the most important core insights for human development. So achieving spiritual enlightenment is enhanced if one can have easy and dynamic access to the spiritual perspectives of other religions. That works much better if you are not making war on one or another religion, and if they are not making war on you. So once again, building bridges between cultures (of which religion is a core component) seems a good thing to do, because it enables the good life, which includes real opportunities for spiritual development as well as some minimal prosperity and safety.

In all of these areas the principle of hybrid vigor, which biologists and especially geneticists embrace, is evident. The term “hybrid vigor” comes from plant and animal breeding, and simply reflects the observation that when pure strains of wheat or beef or cabbages are crossed, the “hybrids” are often more resistant to disease and to other strains of life. We now know biochemically and genetically why this occurs, because many strengths compliment each other, especially disease resistance. But it is even true in metallurgy, where alloys are often stronger and have other good properties in greater proportion than the pure metals unmixed.

So, I encourage building bridges between cultures because when properly done, strengths can be mixed instead of weaknesses, and the civilization of humankind becomes stronger by far. Another, and an especially beautiful side benefit can also occur, because the arts are an aspect of culture that respond with special splendor when artists of different types and training interact. Trade depends on a concept of comparative advantages which makes both parties richer if it is done in a proper social context. And peace between nations is invariably more productive, and far more pleasant than war. So for all these reasons I think that building bridges between cultures is a good idea.

## **2. How?**

Since we are such linguistic creatures, the most obvious way to build bridges between cultures is through communication, with perhaps some emphasis on cultural modalities like art, literature, film and so forth. I will return to those shortly, but first want to comment on some difficulties that go beyond the obvious problem of different languages. People in different cultures often have different worldviews, assumptions, customs and dialects all of which compound the surface problem of differing languages. Therefore I will discuss a rather unusual example from my own culture which may illustrate some of the subtler issues involved. This is building bridges between the military and peace activists. After positive communication is established (which is not exactly easy) one can try to build more durable and practical bridges, by collaboration on common projects and other activities.

For over 23 years I have studied why wars begin (or the “causes” of war) and during all of that time I have tried to get along with both the peace activists of my country and with our professional military. These groups see each other as enemies, usually, and fight more often than they cooperate, even though both see their noble mission as controlling violence and protecting innocents from abuse. How can this be?

Well, I bet Korean history provides some examples of tension between those who would end war and those who are professional warriors! But I want to be a polite guest, so I will comment on American politics rather than Korean politics. In America, even though peace groups and military groups have the same ideal missions, they differ quite a bit in how they would pursue those noble goals. They let those differences of opinion obscure their common objectives. Then they often commit a terrible, but extremely common and human mistake, which is to conclude that because they have different worldviews, then the other group must be evil, greedy, ignorant or, at best, misguided.

One of the most obvious and recurring differences of opinion has to do with money, or “how much is enough” money for national defense versus other priorities like education,

etc. Both peace activists and our military always want more money. So economic consequences often underlie the other issues. But the worldviews of these groups also differ in more profound ways. Some of those differences are reflected in language. For example, the basic meaning of key words like “freedom,” “democracy,” and especially of “justice” are not the same between these groups. It is like our peace activists and our military speak very different dialects, using the same words but meaning very different things. Failure to recognize this leads to enormous frustration and conflict.

A recurring example is when our military will support a government, in the name of “justice,” while our peace activists are supporting an insurgency, with the same goal of promoting “justice.” One group supports the powerful; the other, the weaker party. One group supports the rich, the other the poor. Since they support different sides, each of whom is killing the other and may kill some Americans as well since we get involved in so many foreign conflicts, it is far too easy for my friends to conclude that their own neighbors are evil, when actually they just have different political opinions.

So building bridges between cultures is better done if one is very aware of subtle differences of communication style, of dialect differences, of worldviews, and of other cultural differences between the groups one is trying to bridge. So much work! But time is short, so I am going to address immediately more of the “how to” questions and less of the “why it’s difficult” and “why it’s important.”

Rule 1 – Start now. There are a thousand excuses for inaction, and a million words one can ponder about difficulties and nuances. You can learn while you are building, and the need is great. So start now; just be very alert as the world tells you when you make mistakes.

Rule 2 – Listen Very Carefully. In the peace business we have a phrase called “Active Listening” that comes from conflict resolution techniques. At one level this simply means “pay attention,” but at best it means an intense devotion to understanding the other. During many conflicts people are so passionate expressing their own views that they barely hear, and often severely distort, the views of the party they are arguing with. This does not help, and wastes much time and precious energy. You will inevitably make mistakes as you try to understand another’s culture. If you listen very carefully to the world, it will try to tell you when mistakes are made. And if you embrace this constructive criticism, the bridges you build may endure.

Rule 3 – Seek common ground to work from, and try to connect with the good in your neighbor even if they are a temporary adversary. If people are happy neighbors it is easy to build bridges between them, and you all have experience with that, so no comments are necessary. When people are not happy neighbors, or worse are bitter enemies, building constructive bridges is much harder and even if well built, some will say the bridges will be used for dangerous invasions. At such times, I recommend 3 specific items. First, consider your neighbors adversaries instead of enemies – we must get along together on this earth or we are doomed. Second, try to connect with the good among them, even though there certainly are some bad people there (as in all groups) and some bad impulses in each one (as in all of us). Finally, take some time to find the common ground that good people can agree is worth working on before you venture more ambitious bridge building. Otherwise, much work on good objectives can be lost when the ground shifts or the weather turns bad.

Rule 4 – Restrain your own evil impulses; they too exist. I think further comment on this is not necessary, but if that is desired I recommend the words of Mahatma Gandhi, or Martin Luther King, or Gautama the Buddha. Peace activists are often perceived as rude, angry, even violent people by police and others in authority. My friends are always shocked! In their hearts and minds they are so gentle! But often the peace activists are so angry about the injustices they perceive, that they do not restrain that anger adequately. It leaks out, and sometimes triggers the very well trained responses of their adversary of the moment. In the worst cases, people can die, as has been seen too often in Korea and in the world. So restrain my evil impulses, please God I say, before I go off trying to restrain some other's.

Rule 5 – Expect misunderstandings and other obstacles, then overcome them. Even when you speak the same language there will be many misunderstandings, so much patience is required. When building bridges between different linguistic groups, this problem is 100 times more vexing. So expect many misunderstandings, be very, very patient and assume to start that you are wrong instead of the other. At the least, you will learn quicker this way. Communication is very difficult, but essential to building durable bridges. There will be many other obstacles, especially when bridging serious chasms of misunderstanding and hatred. So be strong as lions and persistent as mosquitoes if the project is important, so that you may overcome as so many before you have done. In the save-the-world business, one must remember that if the problem were easy to solve, it would have been solved long ago.

Rule 6 – Do not let the extremists or the skeptics dominate debate. There are always extremists who are impatient. In the peace business some of these want to blow up bombs, or at least destroy property and defame individuals, pursuing their idea of the just world. That always sets us back. Look at the Middle East for tragic examples of when extremists are stronger than the common ground. There are also always skeptics who think your project is impossible. They do not accomplish much of value on this earth – ignore them. In a moment I will discuss the “Peace Child” project of David Woolcombe, and the larger effort to turn the nuclear arms race around which was done by volunteers and students around the world. There are always extremists and skeptics; they must be controlled like horseflies and gnats.

Rule 7 – Do not expect perfection, this is beyond human skills, just do the best you can and encourage others with the same spirit. More than half of building bridges to the future is a matter of attitude rather than technical skills, or money and materials. I have tried to express that attitude in words, but this is difficult. Do not expect perfection, do not wait until you know everything, do not wait until it is convenient or money is available – saving the world always competes with the financial and other priorities of institutions. So they seldom help. When you know your path is right, venture forth, and have faith that God or fate will help you out. Students are the future; build a better one for you and yours to live in. Believe me, half of your adversaries will simply get old and tired, and leave, and victories will come and positive changes will occur as if by magic if you persevere and act with a positive spirit.

Peace Child, and the act of turning around the Nuclear Arms Race. The nuclear arms race is not over, and all problems are not solved here for sure. But the situation today is still much better than it was when the United States and the Soviet Union each maintained over 20,000 warheads in their inventories, and threatened the world with imminent destruction unless various demands were met. In the early 1980's we little people decided this must change, and by 1990 it was done. No one in authority thought it was possible then, so I will tell you the story of one man's project, Peace Child, and how it relates to the larger endeavor.

A British playwright named David Woolcombe decided that his contribution to this task would be to write a play about American and Soviet children of diplomats, who decided that they deserved a future and talked about how to achieve that. To make a very long story short, I helped them in a few ways, and in one year a dramatic production took place where American students at a Children's Theater in Minnesota, USA and Russian students in a similar theater in Moscow, Soviet Union, staged simultaneous productions mediated by a satellite link. This was extremely beautiful, emotionally moving, and was shown on Soviet national television and in 50 major American cities.

What made it work so well were the students, who could cut through national security nuke-speak very eloquently, and who worked the common ground of all humankind that loves its children. Virtually everyone wants our children to have a future. And much of the logic of mutual assured destruction ("MAD," the dominant nuclear strategy of the last 55 years) is laid bare when children talk about their common fears and ambitions.

The next year, a traveling group of student actors from both countries toured America and the Soviet Union, and played to packed houses (14,000 in our largest theater in Minnesota, for example). It was a very beautiful and emotionally positive time. Even this big cultural act was but a tiny thing in the larger effort by thousands of people in America and in the Soviet Union to turn a whale of a nuclear arms race around. And as you know this work is not totally finished to this day. But, we certainly did turn the momentum around, and we did it without budgets or institutions. In fact, we did it despite considerable resistance from the institutions and bureaucracies of our time. You can too – by building bridges between countries when the moment is right, using cultural and other tools of social change.

### **3. Different Modalities:**

The example of Peace Child used art, specifically theater arts and television, to build a bridge of common ground between people in the United States and the Soviet Union whose governments were then at dagger's point with tens of thousands of nuclear weapons poised to destroy each other according to that doctrine called mutual assured destruction. But this success occurred in a context of thousands of other efforts using quite different modalities, and in fact it could not have succeeded without considerable prior effort in the education and other arenas. The non-profit I run called "Ground Zero Minnesota" is named after a nuclear term and was very involved in many of those efforts both before and after "Peace Child."

So I wish to say a few words about different modalities for building cultural bridges. These include at least trade, education, sport, travel, military and other professional liaisons, and art to which I will return shortly.

Trade: Of all the ways one can promote human survival, trade may be the most powerful in the end. So God bless the businessmen! But only if trade is conducted according to some minimum standards of fairness, and awareness of the global crisis we must all cope with today. As globalization continues its inexorable integration of our world, we see recurring tensions between those who want "free trade" above all else, and those who insist that standards of labor rights, or environmental protection must be included. Occasionally some will argue for more "justice" in the system at large, and they will be opposed by those for whom "markets" are a religion. Markets are marvelous, but they should not become religion.

There is not space here to discuss many complex aspects of trade or resolving those differences I allude to above. So I will try to boil it all down into an absurdly simple phrase: Sustainable Development. We desperately need the management skills, the financial acumen, the practical capabilities, and the international scale of the great corporations in order to survive the crisis before us. We also desperately need them to stop mowing down the last forests, burning up the last drops of oil, catching the last fish in the sea, polluting anything they cannot sell, and running roughshod over the poor of our earth. All of these differences are captured in the concept of “Sustainable Development.”

The term comes from forestry originally, and was quickly adopted by other industries that rely on living systems for their product. It recognizes this basic fact about living systems – that they reproduce – and that therefore if you want to maximize yields over the long term you need to preserve some seed stock and the soils and waters necessary for seeds to grow into useful plant or animal products. Thus, a short sighted corporation might conclude that cutting down EVERY tree in the forest, or catching EVERY fish in the sea would maximize its short term profits. And it might. The downside is that the corporation then destroys a productive resource base that could sustain a somewhat lower yield every year forever if that productive capability were protected.

Wiser economists quickly realized that similar dynamics applied to management labor relations. The short sighted, cruel business may use up labor like any other replaceable commodity, and work people into the ground or abuse them in other ways until they leave. But such businesses lose so much goodwill among their employees, and in the communities who provide their customers, that they will often lose out to more enlightened businesses. Unfortunately, the social context is largely determined by governments that are themselves often purchased by the biggest corporations. This can distort the economic model severely. An example is when government subsidies make it profitable to fish with high technology long after stocks have been reduced below replacement levels and real profit is impossible. Under such circumstances, serious damage to long-term natural resource bases can occur.

These reservations noted, when business and trade are conducted in an enlightened manner, they can do very great things to help us both to relieve poverty and to build bridges between very different cultures on this earth. It is hard for Americans to understand the Chinese and vice versa. But everyone knows the meaning of the phrase Big Mac today, like everyone knows what pizza is, no matter how far from Italy. Whether you like these particular foods or the companies that produce them is a separate matter. My point is that they manage to bridge many other chasms of language and politics, because they focus on serving two of those common ground universals, our human desire to eat and our human desire to eat inexpensively (and now). Half our tools in America are made today in China, which benefits their economy as much as ours, and the goal of global peace as well.

Enlightened businessmen serve many people. They make money for shareholders, but they also provide services to their customers and communities, provide jobs for their employees, and solve myriad practical problems if they are wise. Very enlightened businessmen provide sophisticated “fringe benefits” for their employees, like premium health care, retirement planning and resources, continuing education and professional development.

When all these goods are accomplished, and profit for the corporation and its owners is maintained, all the parties including customers and vendors will benefit from the skill of

enlightened businessmen organizing labor and resources. In economics this is called a pareto-optimal solution; in the peace business, we call them win-win solutions. Bridges built this way between cultures can be enormously constructive because in addition to their intrinsic value they provide resources for building more bridges.

Education: The common ground of education is a bit harder to define, but it is the area I work in most so I will comment on the unusual qualities of education for transformation in areas of social controversy. Issues of war and peace are especially controversial, because by definition there are almost always two or more sides to an issue whose partisans feel strongly enough to kill or to threaten to kill someone. That can be very inconvenient for teachers.

One key is to focus on that which both sides can agree on, and remind them that this body of knowledge is important to understanding their issue. Another key is avoiding direct politics, that is, to NOT campaign for any individual and to AVOID taking sides on the issue no matter how tempting. Key number 3 is to provide very high quality teaching aids with good references to BOTH sides of the controversy in question. And a final key is being supremely polite and patient with the passionate partisans you must deal with.

If you can do all these things well you may get a lot of exceptional education accomplished on those common ground areas that are not in such hot dispute. This leads naturally to identifying the areas the groups disagree on so profoundly. Inquiring minds on both sides learn something objective about the other, instead of just echoes of the accusations of those who harp on differences. At the least, better teaching aids will result, because you gain access to the better thinkers on both sides and their information resources. If you are lucky, some collaborative projects may even result, like conferences or arts productions. Finally, even love may blossom, as when one of those teenage dancers from Russia, and one of our best singers from Washington D.C. ... well, you don't really need to know the details. Let us just observe that humanity's most common interest exerted its force, and the desire to blow each other up with nuclear bombs over differences of political ideology went away.

Now education varies enormously in forms and styles and venues, from the youngest to the oldest age ranges, from slowest to brightest audiences, from formal schools to churches to civic groups, in scale from the individual to large conferences or even vast TV audiences. So there is no easy way to summarize all the styles and forms appropriate for the kind of education that builds strong bridges between cultures to create a better future. There are a million forms and styles and venues. Two key words are "flexibility" and "balance." Flexibility helps you deal with the diversity of needs. Balance enables you to be helpful to all of your students, including the ones you most disagree with. Together, these qualities can help you to survive the white heat of partisan contests over issues of life and death.

Sport: Another area of common ground among people is the desire to play games. Properly done, we observe the Olympics, that bring everyone together in moments of collective drama that remind us of our higher virtues and the better world that could be. Of course, there are moments of controversy and tragedy as well – nothing is perfect in this life. I congratulate Korea on the performance of Ko Gi Hyun and Choi Eun Kyung who won gold and silver medals in one race at our Salt Lake City games. And I regret the disappointment of Kim Dong-Sung who was disqualified while competing with our skater Apolo Anton Ohno. Nothing is perfect in sport as in life, but the Olympic spirit is precious anyway.



My main purpose here is to highlight how bridges between cultures can be built, and despite occasional setbacks, sport provides many such opportunities. I will tell you about one other example. The baseball team from one of the Universities I teach at went to Havana, Cuba a couple of years ago on a goodwill visit. Later, the University of Havana sent its team to St. Paul Minnesota. It was necessary to get special permission from our governments because such travel is generally illegal. Despite that, we went, and they came, to celebrate our common humanity through sport. We were also preparing the ground for that day which will certainly come when Fidel Castro dies and the expatriate Cubans in our state of Florida relent enough to allow our President to restore normal relations with that poor Caribbean country. It would be good if reason could prevail sooner. It is so embarrassing that we in America continue to pick on poor Cubans. But this is also typical of ideological conflicts. Sport allows us a way to heal those wounds and to build some useful bridges.

Travel: Some may say that they are not business people, professors, athletes or artists – this is too hard for ordinary people. But no! Ordinary people accomplish most of the great transformations on this earth, they just do so one tiny piece at a time. Most of us travel sometimes in our lives, and any of us can be ambassadors for the best of our cultures whether those are large and ancient like America and Korea, or small and temporary like the play of a single man from England or the tiny, quiet voice of Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, who still is heard more around the world than the dictators she opposes in what they call Myanmar.

Koreans need no instruction about how to be gracious hosts. We see many thousands of Korean visitors to America each year who have shown me that Koreans also know how to be gracious guests. So I simply repeat that as the world gets smaller, every person has opportunities to present their best side to a world that is ever closer and more curious. In sport this is called “good sportsmanship;” in life it is being a global citizen.

I do hope the sunshine policy of rapprochement between the North and the South of Korea can penetrate the clouds obstructing it today, because the tension between North and South is a matter of concern all around the world. For this reason in particular I encourage travel along this axis of goodwill. I encourage this also because I believe in the power of human hearts to remember that we are all relatives in the end, no matter what self-interested bureaucracies may tell us. I am a geneticist, believe me, we are all relatives on this earth.

Military and other Professional Liaisons: A specialized kind of travel, education and dialogue has a particular power in building bridges between cultures, sometimes before the governments involved can establish full normal relations. These are liaisons between professional associations of many kinds. For decades I have attended international academic conferences, for example, where I could meet people from countries still on America’s official “forbidden” list.

There is a term for collaborative efforts that may ensue that relates especially to building constructive bridges between cultures. That is called “Track Two Diplomacy.” Track One is the official government exchanges, and they can certainly be very helpful too. But often, when the governments are too stubborn, ordinary citizens can break through walls of ignorance, and build bridges to a better future by pursuing track two diplomatic efforts, collaborative education, sister city programs, art, joint business ventures, sport, and so forth.

Military liaisons are especially important when it comes to issues of war and peace. Soldiers are very familiar with such exercises, are highly skilled at conducting them, and are resourceful and credible. So only one observation is necessary here. The biggest and most direct benefit is resolving misconceptions about each other. Too many wars have started because of simple misunderstandings that got out of hand. And when propaganda bureaus are especially active, absurdly ridiculous stereotypes of the other can prevail over common sense. Also, military units are usually more immune to the charge that they are unpatriotic, or soft on the “enemy.” So military liaisons are especially important and valuable kinds of professional liaisons that can help to build some bridges between cultures in conflict.

Art: Artists as a category of human being like having fun more than your average soldier, and they are in the business of making other people feel happy more often than sad as well. So liaisons between artists come more naturally than some other liaisons, and can result in especially fun and constructive projects as I hope the Peace Child example conveyed. Whether actual children result or not is optional.

Art has other qualities that make it especially helpful for building bridges between cultures. First, it transcends some of the ordinary linguistic barriers because it often avoids text entirely as in photos, or pictorial art. Even in film, where language is still important, much of the communication occurs visually, as in “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” which was very popular in America – most unusual for a ‘foreign’ film in my insular country.

Music may be the most transportable. Certainly musical styles have flashed across the world with lightning speed and usually positive results. But I am also a total music nerd (= ignorant + incompetent) so I cannot comment further here.

The best example I can cite of all these forms coming together could be seen at the Hague Appeal for Peace conference, held in May of 1999 at the Hague, Netherlands. This was a remarkable gathering of civil society in its own right, with at least 8,000 people from over 100 nations working together in a globally-minded city devoted to resolving conflicts among nations. But the remarkable quality for this moment was the ubiquitous presence of artists of all types. That was a result of one very wealthy donor’s belief that culture and art were very important transformative agents, and she was right in my opinion.

We at Ground Zero produced an educational video on this conference, and of the 51 television programs we have produced, I think it was the most positive and pleasant due to that factor. One can talk about the dangers of nuclear or other exotic weapons until your audience despairs, or you can educate on the horrors of torture, genocide and war until they flee in exhaustion. But more will come on their own initiative to something fun. Art is more fun than lectures, usually. There is still time to talk about horrible problems when you need to, and people are more encouraged by the presence of youth to do something useful as well.

A final note about television. I don’t like television as an educational medium for many reasons. But we reluctantly began producing television in half-hour segments suited for teachers’ classes about ten years ago, and it certainly does reach out to larger audiences and has other virtues than dry lectures or written study guides. Finally at least in America, most political discourse takes place on television, so if you cannot work in that medium, you literally do not exist to most people in the policy arena. This is also one reason our foreign

policies are so often short sighted and simplistic, however. Sound bites make bad policy. So I object, without much effect, because this is a reality we must live with in our work.

### **Conclusion and a note on our Center for the Study of Intelligence and Wisdom:**

Using these different methods and modalities to work for a constructive vision of humankind living on our common earth has helped me to build some bridges between people and cultures so far. But I have not build one of them alone. Every step along the way has been made possible by other people. For one example, my opportunity to speak with you today was created by professor Jung, Dong-Hyeon, and my opportunities to meet him were enabled by the labors of many others in the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations that brought us together. For another example, the non-profit group I run is all volunteer, no one gets paid, and nothing whatever would get done without considerable help from many other people working toward a common cause.

All great problems require efforts from many people working in different ways on the common concern. Building bridges between cultures requires this especially because of the many modalities and styles of languages and sub-groups of people involved.

I will close by telling you just a little bit about our latest project, which is creating a “Center for the Study of Intelligence and Wisdom.” Its primary purpose is to train young people in how to do effective, constructive education for social change. We will do that, and also empower them by providing television production capabilities and some other resources that enable very large-scale public education. When you are trying to turn a nuclear arms race around, you must sponsor thousands of programs. Since we are now trying to alter the course of human civilization, which is creeping step by step toward its third global war in under 100 years, we may need to sponsor millions of education events. That takes more than a kitchen table and a basement phone line, no matter how creatively and efficiently used.

But our center has an exotic purpose as well that is sometimes more interesting. We are specifically interested in how to get a bit more wisdom into the official products of national intelligence agencies. In short, I study spies and ask them and others how we might improve the bureaucracies that employ spies so that more wisdom could make it into their recommendations to political leaders. Why? Because intelligence agencies are especially important to the process by which wars begin, and because many are quite dysfunctional today. Among other problems, they focus too much on keeping secrets, and too little on figuring out what is going on and what to do about that.

Humankind is entering a period of considerable stress, even crisis depending on how wisely we manage the challenges in front of us. Getting a bit more wisdom into intelligence agencies is just a path to getting more wisdom out of our leaders. All of that process benefits if the citizens of democracies care a bit more about wisdom too. Whether you are in business and can promote sustainable economic activity to help us relieve poverty and related conflict, a teacher in school or a student on vacation, an artist, an athlete, a soldier, or a citizen of any kind, you can help with the great challenge of human survival during the third millennium of the modern era. I thank you very much for your precious time and attention today, and wish you all the very best success with your important projects and in life.

Best wishes always, -- Michael Andregg, from St. Paul Minnesota, USA.